

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 IO-11 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 NSC-05

OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PRS-01 HEW-06 AGR-10 AID-05 EB-07

DODE-00 L-03 SS-15 /091 W
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O R 090002Z JAN 76 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2239
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
DEA HDQS WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 0237

LIMA FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

S/NM FOR DUGSTAD; SER/INC WAMPLER; DEA FOR EOI CUSACK;

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR MX

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE ON HERBICIDES

REF: A. ALBERTI/DUGSTAD TELCON JAN 8, 1976 B. 76 MEXICO 147
C. 76 MEXICO 65.

1. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE ACCOUNT
APPEARING IN JAN 8 EXCELSIOR OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE HELD
BY DR. ALEJANDRO GERTZ, THE OVERALL NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR
FOR THE MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, THIS
PRESS CONFERENCE WAS GIVEN IN RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLES RE-
PORTED IN REFS B&C, WHICH CONTAINED CRITICISM OF THE GOM'S
USE OF HERBICIDES AGAINST POPPY AND MARIJUANA FIELDS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: "YES, WE ARE USING HERBICIDES AND WE ARE
GOING TO END THE GROWING OF NARCOTICS".
GRAMOXONE -IS INOFFENSIVE TO THE ECOLOGY",
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"THIS IS NEITHER A MERE DECLARATION NOR A COMMITMENT

WITH ANY COUNTRY"

"WHOEVER ARE OPPOSED TO THIS CAMPAIGN ARE NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKERS AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES"

BY ELIAS CHAVEZ, EXCELSIOR REPORTER.

MARIJUANA AND POPPY ARE GROWN OVER APPROXIMATELY SIX
HUNDRED THOUSAND SQUARE KILOMETERS, MORE THAN ONE FOURTH
OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY, YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED THE
OFFICIAL MAYOR OF THE PROCURADURIA GENERAL, ALEJANDRO
GERTZ MANERO, WHO DECLARED: "YES...WE ARE USING HERBI-
CIDES AND BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR WE ARE GOING TO
FINISH TOTALLY WITH THE CULTIVATION OF NARCOTICS IN THIS
COUNTRY. THIS IS NOT SIMPLY A DECLARATION OR A COMMITMENT
TO ANY COUNTRY; IT IS A FIRM COMMITMENT TO OURSELVES AND
FOR THE DIGNITY OF MEXICO".

GERTZ MANERO ASSURED US THAT THE HERBICIDE USED--
GRAMOXONE--"IS INOFFENSIVE TO THE ECOLOGY" AND IT IS
COMPLETELY AUTHORIZED BY THE SANITARY CODE AND BY THE
SECRETARIAT OF AGRICULTURE.

"WHOEVER ARE OPPOSED--HE SAID""TO THIS BATTLE
WHICH BEGAN THE TWENTIETH OF NOVEMBER, ARE THE NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKERS AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES, WHO HAVE UNLEASHED A
CAMPAIGN TO SHOW US AS IRRESPONSIBLE, AS CRIMINALS WHO
ARE CAUSING AN ECOLOGY PROBLEM.

"NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES--
HE ADDED--WANT TO STOP US IN OUR PLACE, BUT THIS TIME
WE WILL DEFEAT THEM TOTALLY."

AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE EFFICIENCY RESULTING FROM THE USE
OF HERBICIDES, HE INDICATED THAT IN THE PAST MONTH
"WE DEBOUNDED THE (GREATEST) SUCCESSES WHICH HAD EVER BEEN REACHED
IN THE HISTORY OF ANY CAMPAIGN AND THIS MONTH THE RESULTS WILL
BE INCREDIBLE".

CONCRETELY, HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE IN DECEMBER OF
1974 THERE WERE DESTROYED 206 FIELDS OF MARIJUANA AND
POPPY, REPRESENTING A TOTAL OF 557,527 SQUARE METERS,
DURING THE PAST MONTH THERE WERE DESTROYED--WITH THE
USE OF HERBICIDES--694 FIELDS CONTAINING 2,551,139
SQUARE METERS.

THE SLIGHTLY MORE THAN SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND SQUARE
KILOMETERS IN WHICH POPPY AND MARIJUANA ARE GROWN
BELONG--PRINCIPALLY--TO THE STATES OF OAXACA,
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GUERRERO, COLIMA, JALISCO, MICHOACAN, SINALOA, DURANGO
AND CHIHUAHUA.

THOSE ARE THE "CRITICAL STATES", SAID GERTZ MANERO,
IN WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED AS MANY AS TWENTY THOUSAND
FIELDS OF MARIJUANA AND POPPY.

DURING THE PAST YEAR--HE SAID--THERE WERE DESTROYED
MORE THAN EIGHTEEN THOUSAND FIELDS, BUT "EVEN THEN MUCH
MEXICAN NARCOTICS ENTERED THE CONSUMER MARKET."

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PROBLEM IS COMPLICATED BECAUSE
ASIDE FROM THE GREAT LAND AREA USED FOR THE CULTIVATION
OF NARCOTICS, THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS PLANT DURING THE
ENTIRE YEAR"IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SEVERAL HARVESTS IN A
SHORT TIME. AND TO FINISH WITH ALL THOSE FIELDS,
THROUGH THOSE SYSTEMS WHICH WE HAD BEEN USING, IS
PRACTICALLY AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK. EVEN THOUGH WE MIGHT
HAVE A SQUAD OF SOLDIERS IN ORDER TO DESTROY EACH FIELD,
HOW ARE WE GOING TO TRANSPORT ALL THESE PEOPLE AND GIVE
THEM FOOD AND RETURN TO CARRY THEM OUT WHEN THE PLANTING
AREAS ARE HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS FROM THE HIGHWAYS, IN
THE MOST INACCESSIBLE PLACES IN THE MOUNTAINS, AT ALTITUDES
BETWEEN FIVE AND SEVEN THOUSAND FEET?"
FURTHERMORE--HE SAID--"IT SERVES NOTHING TO DESTROY
SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE FIELDS IF THE WITH THE REMAINING
THIRTY PERCENT IT IS SUFFICIENT TO PRODUCE A QUANTITY
OF NARCOTICS WHICH IN ANY CASE REPRESENTS A SERIOUS
PROBLEM. WE MUST DESTROY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE
FIELDS."

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 IO-11 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2240

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

DEA HDQS WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 0237

LIMA FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

S/NM FOR DUGSTAD; SER/INC WAMPLER; DEA FOR EOI CUSACK;

BUT HE INDICATED THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FIELDS MUST ALSO BE CARRIED OUT "BEFORE THEY SCORE THE POPPIES AND OBTAIN THE GUM. BECAUSE IT SERVES NO USE TO DESTROY THEM WHEN THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN SCORED AND WHEN THE GUM HAS ALREADY BEEN OBTAINED. WE WOULD THEN ONLY BE FOOLING OURSELVES". FACED WITH THIS PROBLEM THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DECIDED TO SEEK AN INTELLIGENT SOLUTION" IN ORDER TO DESTROY PLANTINGS BEFORE THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS COULD EXPLOIT THEM". THE LOGICAL SOLUTION WAS--HE SAID--THE USE OF HERBICIDES" BUT HERBICIDES PERMITTED BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES."

HE ASSURED US THAT THE HERBICIDE USED, GRAMOXONE, HAS BEEN USED FOR "MANY YEARS" IN THE ENTIRE NATIONAL TERRITORY WHEREVER THERE IS ORGANIZED AGRICULTURE." HE POINTED OUT THAT BEFORE DECIDING UPON THE USE OF GRAMOXONE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE CONSULTED THE AGRICULTURAL AUTHORITIES AND THAT BASED ON THE SANITARY UNCLASSIFIED

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CODE"THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AUTHORIZED ITS USE IN THE COMMUNICATION 230/74 OF THE NINTH OF JULY 1974." "IF WE WOULD USE A NON-APPROVED HERBICIDE"--HE SAID-- "WE WOULD BE CRIMINALS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IS A RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION AND WE COULD NOT COMBAT ONE CRIME BY COMMITTING ANOTHER." HE THEN SAID THAT IT WAS DECIDED TO USE HERBICIDES "NOT BECAUSE OF FOREIGN PRESSURES, BUT BECAUSE ONE HAS TO SEE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM IN ORDER TO FEEL HIMSELF COMMITTED TO RESOLVE IT." GERTZ MANERO MENTIONED THAT THROUGH THE USE OF HERBICIDES "WITH A SINGLE HELICOPTER WE CAN DESTROY MORE THAN FIFTY FIELDS DAILY." AND CONCERNING HIS ASSURANCE THAT GRAMOXONE DOES NOT CAUSE DAMAGE TO THE ECOLOGY, HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS SAME HERBICIDE WAS USED BY THE FARMERS IN ORDER TO CLEAR FIELDS OF POTATOES, SUGAR CANE AND COTTON.

3. EMBASSY WILL REPORT EDITORIAL COMMENT IF AND WHEN IT OCCURS.

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